



USAID | MACEDONIA
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. assistance helped the high school graduation of 198 Roma students

Over the past four years USAID's Roma Education Program provided scholarships and academic support to almost all Roma students country-wide who began secondary school in 2004. After four years of support, 198 Roma students successfully completed their secondary school, with 47 students finishing three-year vocational school and 151 completing a four-year secondary education. Furthermore, 65 of them enrolled in university. The American people, through USAID's Roma Education Program, have invested around \$1,000,000 in the secondary school component of the program, which, in addition to scholarships, included extensive mentoring, academic support and teacher training. USAID is part of the U.S. Mission in Macedonia.

At the event to celebrate the students' graduation, U.S. Ambassador Philip Reeker announced the continuation of the scholarship program for a new group of 120 Roma secondary school students beginning in 2008/9 school year. "We are expecting to see more and more Roma secondary and university graduates in the years to come. We are happy to witness the growing number of well educated Roma who will contribute to the development of Macedonia. We believe that this critical mass of educated Roma will improve their position in the society and prove that a cycle of poverty and exclusion can be broken," said U.S. Ambassador Philip Reeker.

The Roma Education Program is implemented by the Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia (FOSIM), through comprehensive educational interventions from pre-school to university. It works to improve the retention and academic achievement of Roma youth. In addition to supporting secondary school students, USAID's Roma Education Program is preparing 250 pre-school age Roma children to enter primary school, providing after school support and subject based tutoring to 740 primary school students and scholarships, mentoring and academic support to 60 university students.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested nearly \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is implementing projects that create jobs, reduce corruption, and prepare Macedonian students for the workforce. These initiatives improve the quality of life and support Macedonia's transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.

